Goodbye, my Rose Garden
{3}
Story & Art by
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Goodbye,
My Rose Garden
Vol. 3

Contents


LADY ALICE, YOU'RE...
VICTOR?
PLEASE FORGIVE ME FOR NOT SAYING SO BEFORE.
BUT I...


I LIED TO MY FAMILY ABOUT GOING TO LONDON.
I CAME TO LOOK FOR YOU.
YOU MEAN MORE TO ME THAN ANYONE ELSE.
BUT IT IS YOUR DECISION WHETHER TO RETURN TO ROSE BARROW OR NOT.
I WILL NOT FORCE YOU.
JUST KNOW THIS.
THE DESPERATION THAT BROUGHT YOU TO FIND VICTOR...
IS THE SAME DESPERATION I HAVE FOR YOU.

{ Chapter 12 }
Who Are the Briars?




I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.
SORRY I'M BACK SO LATE.
......
ARE YOU ALONE?
WHAT?
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BRING SOMEONE WITH YOU, SO I PREPARED ENOUGH FOR TWO.
......!
FLINCH
OH, YOU'RE HOME?


I TRUST YOU'RE ENJOYING YOUR HOLIDAY?
LORD EDWARD...
I WASN'T AWARE YOU WERE HERE.
I AM ENJOYING MY STAY, THANKS TO YOUR HOSPITAL-ITY.
I AM PLEASED TO HEAR IT.
YOU DID NOT COME ALL THE WAY TO ENGLAND JUST SERVE OTHERS...
AND I HEARD YOU'D NOT HAD A BREAK.
I THINK IT WISE TO TAKE THIS TIME TO **CONSIDER YOUR FUTURE.**
I AM... GRATEFUL FOR YOUR CONCERN.


WHY HAS LORD EDWARD COME ALL THIS WAY?
IF SUSANNE SAW LADY ALICE AND I...
THEN PERHAPS SHE TOLD LORD EDWARD.
WHAT SHOULD I DO ...?
I DON'T WANT TO MAKE THINGS WORSE FOR LADY ALICE...
OH...
I HAVE KEPT YOU ENTIRELY TOO LONG.
YOU HAVE NOT EATEN YET, HAVE YOU?
I ATE EARLIER.
PLEASE, ENJOY YOUR MEAL.



YES...
PLEASE EXCUSE ME.
TMP TMP
THE QUEEN'S TWIN
THAT BOOK...
KA-CHAK
HELLO.
LORD EDWARD.
SHFF
DO NOT LET ME INTERRUPT YOU.


SO, WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF MISS HANAKO?
Hm...!
SHE IS RATHER... STRANGE.
MEANING?
SHE IS OUR GUEST...
AND YET, LAST NIGHT, SHE CAME TO DINNER IN HER MAID UNIFORM.
HA HA!
DID SHE NOW?
IT WOULD SEEM SHE IS A WORKER TO HER CORE.
SO, DID YOU ALLOW HER TO HELP?
NO, OF COURSE NOT. SHE IS OUR GUEST.
YOU ARE RATHER CONSCIENTIOUS.
BY THE WAY...


WHY DID YOU SET THE TABLE FOR TWO?
......
I...
I SEEM TO HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT YOU WOULDN'T BE JOINING US.
I SET A PLACE FOR YOU.
YOU THOUGHT I WOULD CHOOSE TO DINE WITH A SERVANT?
HA HA!
SO EVEN YOU CAN BE CARELESS EVERY NOW AND THEN.
I WAS ALMOST CERTAIN... YOU WERE EXPECTING ANOTHER GUEST.


NO...
THERE IS NO ONE ELSE.
IF ANYTHING OF NOTE HAPPENS, INFORM ME IMMEDIATELY.
I'M COUNTING ON YOU.
......
I SEE.
YES...
UNDERSTOOD, LORD EDWARD.


"IT IS THE SAME DESPERATION I HAVE FOR YOU."
SHE SAID THAT SHE WANTS ME.
IT MAKES ME SO HAPPY, I CAN SCARCELY SIT STILL.
BUT ...
PRECISELY BECAUSE OF THAT, I CANNOT RETURN.


"HANAKO ...
"IF YOU ARE WILLING TO RETURN WITH ME...
"THEN MEET ME ON THE BEACH ...
"TOMORROW EVENING.
"BEFORE THE SUN SINKS BENEATH THE HORIZON."
......
I WANT TO RETURN WITH LADY ALICE.
BUT IF I DO, MY FEELINGS FOR HER...
MAY ONLY BRING HER MORE HEARTACHE.
I...


IS THE MEAL NOT TO YOUR LIKING?
AH!
......!
OH!
NO...!
I...
IT'S DELICIOUS!
I... APOLOGIZE FOR LAST NIGHT.
HUH?
YOU SOUGHT TO HELP ME OUT OF THE GOODNESS OF YOUR OWN HEART...
AND I TURNED YOU AWAY SO HARSHLY.
IF I'M MAKING YOU UNCOMFORT-ABLE, I CAN LEAVE.


ABOUT LADY ALICE?
OH...
OH, NO!
IT ISN'T BECAUSE ...!
I WAS MERELY... LOST IN THOUGHT.
I SAW YOU CRYING ON THE BEACH.
....
WAIT...



DID...
DID YOU TELL LORD EDWARD...
THAT LADY ALICE IS HERE?
NO...
NOT YET.
THE WAY THE TWO OF YOU WERE TOGETHER SUGGESTS SOMETHING MORE THAN A MISTRESS AND HER MAID.
IT SEEMS YOU BOTH HAVE SPECIAL FEELINGS FOR EACH ANOTHER.


H-HOW ...?
THAT BOOK YOU WERE CARRYING EARLIER WAS *THE QUEEN'S TWIN*, WAS IT NOT?
WHAT ...?
HAVE YOU READ "MARTHA'S LADY" YET?
OH, YES I HAVE...
While working at a home in the country-side...
a maid named Martha encounters a visitor by the name of Miss Helena. Miss Helena's cheerful and kind nature earns Martha's admiration.
Even after years without seeing her, Martha still regards Miss Helena as sacred.


Eventu-ally, Miss Helena's husband passes away...
She finally visits and realizes her long-held feelings.
DO YOU FIND THAT STORY TO BE A HAPPY ONE?
PER-HAPS...
I SEE...
I CANNOT SEE IT THAT WAY.
MARTHA WAS UNABLE TO SHARE HER TRUE FEELINGS FOR OVER FORTY YEARS.
IT IS A CRUEL TALE, IN WHICH SHE IS EXPECTED TO ENDURE DECADES OF PAIN FOR LOVE.
SHAAAAA


HOW-EVER...
IF SHE COULD NOT LET THAT PERSON GO, NO MATTER WHAT...
NO MATTER HOW THE WORLD TRIED TO KEEP THEM APART...
AND NO MATTER HOW HARD SHE TRIED...
EVEN KNOWING THAT ONLY TRAGEDY AWAITED HER...
THEN PERHAPS THAT IS THE **DEEPEST** FORM OF LOVE...?


YOU POOR THING...
YOU'RE ENDURING YOUR OWN HEART-ACHE, AREN'T YOU?
—...!
SHAAAAA


HANAKO'S EYES...
ARE ELEGANT SUNLIGHT WHICH MERE WORDS COULD NEVER DO JUSTICE.
HOW LONG HAS SHE...?
I WAS SO DESPERATE FOR HER TO STAY...
THAT I REVEALED MY SECRET IN HASTE.


I HAD NOT INTENDED TO CAUSE HER MORE TUR-MOIL...
WHEN SHE IS ALREADY IN SO MUCH PAIN.
CLENCH...
I AM SUCH A FOOL.
AND SO INCREDIBLY SELFISH.
SHAAA
TAA
I CAUSE NOTHING BUT PAIN TO THOSE THAT I CHERISH.
TAA
AND YET...
IF HANAKO IS SUFFERING, I WANT TO BE BY HER SIDE.
I WON'T GIVE HER UP TO ANYONE.
EVEN IF IT CAUSES HER PAIN...
I...


CLENCH...
WHY DOES THIS HURT SO MUCH?


MISS SUSANNE... MIGHT I HAVE A MOMENT?
I WILL LIKELY BE RETURNING TOMORROW.
I WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS.
YOU'RE LEAVING WITH LADY ALICE?
SHE SAID SHE'LL WAIT FOR ME ON THE BEACH UNTIL THE SET SETS.
I INTEND TO TELL HER HOW I FEEL.
LIPTON'S
DELICIOUS BLEND
CHICORY AND COFFEE
RECISTERED


IF SHE'LL HAVE ME...
THEN I WANT TO RETURN WITH HER.
I SEE...
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE DECIDED, I'M SURE IT'S FOR THE BEST.
HOW-EVER...
YOU MUST KNOW THAT ONLY PAIN AWAITS...
WHEN YOU FANTASIZE OVER A HAPPILY EVER AFTER THAT CAN NEVER BE.
....


{ Chapter 13}
The Accomplice Smiles Back


WELL.
WHERE MIGHT YOU BE OFF TO?
I'M... OFF TO THE BOOK-SHOP.
WHERE ARE YOU HEADED, LORD EDWARD?
I AM MEETING SOME FRIENDS OF MINE...
AT THE GUEST HOUSE BY THE PIER.
...!
HE'LL FIND OUT THAT LADY ALICE IS HERE...
I CANNOT LET THAT HAPPEN!


I SAY...
YOU MUST REALLY LIKE BOOKS.
IS THAT WHY YOU CAME HERE?
Y...
YES.
YOU CAME TO STUDY LITERATURE...
DO YOU HAVE A TUTOR?
AN ACQUAINTANCE OF MINE IS A NOVELIST. I WOULD BE HAPPY TO MAKE THE INTRODUCTION.
OH, NO-- I...
Gulp...
IS THERE A PROBLEM?


I ALREADY HAVE SOMEONE I HOPE TO STUDY UNDER...
DO YOU? WHOM MIGHT THAT BE?
VICTOR FRANKS.
BUT NO ONE SEEMS TO KNOW WHERE "HE" IS.
I'VE BEEN SEARCHING... EVER SINCE I ARRIVED.
Hmm...
A PSEUD-ONYMOUS AUTHOR...
I WOULD BE HAPPY TO ASSIST.
I MAY NOT LOOK THE PART, BUT I AM RATHER WELL-KNOWN.
N-NO! I COULDN'T IMPOSE!


BUT IF YOU DO NOT FIND HIM, YOU SHALL NEVER ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL.
TMP TMP
YOU SEEM TO HAVE LOST YOUR WAY, HAVING FOUND YOURSELF...
IN SUCH LAVISH SURROUNDINGS AT ALICE'S SIDE.
DO YOU NOT THINK IT IS TIME YOU LET ALICE BE?


......
THAT QUIETLY THREAT-ENING MANNER...
HE ISN'T EVEN ATTEMPTING TO HIDE THE MALICE LURKING BENEATH HIS GENTLEMANLY FACADE.
I SHALL BE GOING THEN.


YOU ARE WELCOME TO REMAIN AS LONG AS YOU LIKE.
IN FACT, YOU SHOULD CONSIDER YOUR NEXT MOVE VERY CAREFULLY.
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
WE CAN'T GO TO THE PIER...
I NEED TO FIND LADY ALICE...
....


JONES...
KEEP AN EYE ON THAT JAPANESE GIRL.
IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, INFORM ME AT ONCE.
UNDER-STOOD, SIR.


MISS DOUGLAS HAS ALREADY RETURNED HER KEY.
SHE LEFT A SHORT TIME AGO.
I SEE...
I AM TOO LATE.
SHE'S LEFT THE HOTEL...
WHERE ELSE WOULD SHE GO...?
OH!


E-EXCUSE ME!
COULD YOU TELL ME HOW TO FIND EVERY BOOK-SHOP IN TOWN?


IT ISN'T LONG UNTIL SUN-SET...
AND I CAN'T FIND LADY ALICE ANY-WHERE...
IS THAT LORD EDWARD'S CARRIAGE ...?


EVEN IF I FOUND LADY ALICE...
WE COULD NOT SPEAK HERE.
MAYBE IT'S BETTER THIS WAY.
PERHAPS I SHOULD WITHDRAW NOW...
AND AVOID FURTHER HURT OR REJECTION.
....


AND YET...
CLENCH
I CAN'T SIMPLY ABANDON HER...
YOO-HOO!
LOOK WHO IT IS!
MISS HANAKO!
THANKS AGAIN FOR YOUR PURCHASE THE OTHER DAY!
HUH? O-OH! THE GIRL FROM THE USED BOOK-SHOP!
IT'S MARIE!
COME WITH ME A SECOND!
WHA?!
YANK
?!


N-NO!
I'M WAITING FOR SOME-ONE...!
OH, I KNOW!
YOU DO?
WHISPER
LADY ALICE IS BACK AT THE SHOP.
...!
Come along now.
....


JINGLE JINGLE♪
Sorry to keep you waiting!
Gasp!
HANAKO...!
THERE YOU ARE!
LADY ALICE...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
SUSANNE FOUND ME AT THE CAFÉ.
SHE TOLD ME THAT EDWARD IS HERE.
SO SHE BROUGHT MISS ALICE TO THE BOOK-SHOP TO HIDE!
MISS SUSANNE DID THAT?


I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR YOU AS WELL.
I THOUGHT YOU'D GONE TO A BOOKSHOP...
NORMALLY, I WOULD HAVE...
BUT I HAD SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT TODAY.
I WANTED A CUP OF TEA TO HELP CALM ME...
SO I CHOSE WHAT I BELIEVED WAS A QUIET SPOT.
SUSANNE KNEW I WOULD CHOOSE A CAFÉ NEAR THE HOTEL.
ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR WATSON!
えっへん!
EHEH!
MY, WHY ARE YOU SO PROUD?
Because we're friends.
Haah...


STILL ...
FOR SUSANNE TO KNOW I AM HERE, THAT I WOULD BE WAITING...
SHE'S A WORLD-CLASS DETECTIVE!
SHE FIGURED IT ALL OUT ON HER OWN.
YOU MUST HAVE TOLD HER A GREAT DEAL.
BUT ...
WHY WOULD SHE HELP ME?
THIS MORNING, SHE WAS TRYING TO DISSUADE ME FROM GOING TO YOU.


PURRRRRRR
MAYBE SUSIE WAS TRYING TO SAVE HER PAST SELF.
...?
OH, NOTHING!
GYAAGH!
IS IT SO LATE ALREADY?!
I NEED TO GO SHOP-PING!
TO GET INGREDIENTS FOR DINNER!
I'M LOCKING UP, BUT FEEL FREE TO STAY AS LONG AS YOU LIKE.
TAKE YOUR TIME CHAT-TING!
KLATTA
KLATTA
KLATTA
KLATTA
MISS MARIE?


THANK YOU!
MM-HM!
BA-TNK
CLOSED
SO THEN ...
DOES THIS MEAN...
YOU SHALL RETURN TO ROSE BARROW WITH ME?
I'M... NOT SURE WHAT I SHOULD DO.
WHY NOT...?
DIDN'T YOU COME ALL THIS WAY TO MEET ME? TO MEET VICTOR?


SAY YOU'LL COME BACK WITH ME...
PLEASE... HANAKO.
BUT...
IF YOU ONLY KNEW HOW I FELT...
YOU'D PUSH ME AWAY.
I...
LADY ALICE...
....
Clench


DO YOU LOVE ME?


I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU STILL CARE DEEPLY FOR ELIZA-SENSEI.
I KNOW FIRSTHAND WHAT AN INCREDIBLE WOMAN SHE IS.
AND I'VE FINALLY ...
REALIZED HOW JEALOUS I AM. I WILL NEVER COMPARE TO HER.
IT'S PITIFUL, HOW MUCH IT HURTS.
I COULDN'T BEAR FOR YOU TO SEE THAT SIDE OF ME.


SOME-ONE LIKE ME, SO FULL OF WRETCHED EMO-TIONS...
I HAVE NO RIGHT TO BE YOUR FRIEND.


HUH...?
I WONDER, WOULD IT UPSET YOU...
IF I SAID I AM HAPPY YOU ARE JEALOUS?


I WANT YOU BY MY SIDE, ALL OF YOU.
INCLUDING THOSE FEELINGS.
AH ...!
HOW CRUEL.
I LOVE YOU SO MUCH!
AND YET, I CALLED US FRIENDS ...!


"FRIENDS" DO NOT DO THAT.


I LONG TO HAVE YOU WITH ME.
THIS MIGHT BE THE "LOVE THAT DARE NOT SPEAK ITS NAME" THAT WILDE SPOKE OF.
I STILL CANNOT BE CERTAIN.
EITHER WAY...
IT CERTAINLY FEELS CLOSE.


HANAKO...
STAY BY MY SIDE.
PLEASE LET ME BE SURE...
THAT THIS IS LOVE.
I'M A TERRIBLE PERSON...


ONCE I AM CERTAIN...
I SHALL FIND A WAY FOR US TO FACE THE WORLD TOGETHER.
AFTER ALL, ARE WE NOT ACCOMPLICES?
LADY ALICE...
PLEASE DON'T CRY.


IF IT IS YOUR WISH...
THEN I WILL HAPPILY REMAIN BY YOUR SIDE.
LET'S GO HOME.
BACK TO ROSE BARROW.






LORD EDWARD...
I SHALL RETURN TO LONDON.
PREPARE A CARRIAGE TO TAKE ME TO THE STATION.
AS YOU WISH, SIR.


{ Chapter 14}
A Momentary Masquerade


WHAAA?!
YOU'RE LEAVING?!
WE WERE JUST BECOMING FRIENDS!
I'M SURE WE'LL BE BACK FOR A VISIT.
BESIDES, I SHOULDN'T ENCROACH ON LORD EDWARD'S HOME ANY LONGER.
WHAT DID YOU TELL EDWARD OF YOUR DEPAR-TURE?
ABOUT THAT...
HE LEFT FOR LONDON SUDDENLY LAST NIGHT.
I NEVER GOT TO THANK HIM.
HONESTLY, I WAS A LITTLE **RELIEVED** I DIDN'T HAVE TO SEE HIM.
Hee Hee...
ONCE WE'RE HOME, YOU CAN WRITE HIM A THANK YOU LETTER.



YOU TWO HAVE BEEN SO HELPFUL.
PLEASE DO COME AND VISIT ROSE BARROW ANYTIME.
WHAA?!
REALLY?! WE MOST CERTAINLY WILL!
WAAAH!
That would be amazing!
I AM BUT A SERVANT. YOUR KIND WORDS ARE ENOUGH FOR ME.
WHAP
WHAAAT?
OH, SUSIE! LET'S GO!
WE CAN SLEEP IN HANAKO'S BED WITH HER!
She is a fellow maid, after all!
WHAT?!
MY BED?!
There's no way!!
You won't know until you try!!
We could sleep like this.
No, absolutely not!!
LADY ALICE ...
MAY I HAVE A MOMENT?



'IS BOOK BAZ
JINGLE JINGLE
I UNDERSTAND THIS IS IMPUDENT, BUT I MUST GIVE YOU A WARNING.
I SHALL SAY NOTHING OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP, OF COURSE...
BUT HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THE PAIN YOU WILL CAUSE HER...
SO LONG AS YOU LIVE AS A NOBLEWOMAN?
I HAVE.
HOWEVER... I CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT HER.


SHE IS THE SINGLE RAY OF SUNSHINE IN MY LIFE.
HOW CAN ANY HUMAN BEING LIVE WITH-OUT THE LIGHT?
I SEE...
IF THAT IS HOW YOU FEEL...
THEN HER LIGHT IS YOURS TO PROTECT.
I KNOW...


S.E.&C.R.
WARRIOR SQUARE STATION
SHFF
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR EVERY-THING.
PLEASE TAKE CARE ON YOUR JOURNEY HOME.
AWWW!
SEE YOU NEXT TIME! SUSIE AND I WILL DEFINITELY WRITE!
YOU TWO TAKE CARE AS WELL!
ANYTIME YOU FIND YOURSELVES IN A BIND...
PLEASE COME TO US.
RIGHT!


SHE SAID "US"!
WE REALLY ARE KINDRED SPIRITS!
How Wonderful!
THEY WILL BE ALL RIGHT... WON'T THEY?
CERTAINLY ...
HANAKO ...
THANK YOU FOR RETURNING WITH ME.


I INTEND TO FACE MY FEELINGS HEAD-ON.
REALLY ...?
Yes...
WATCH ME.
NOD
NOD
BUT, HANAKO ...
YOU MUST NOT LOOK AT ME THAT WAY IN PUBLIC.
YOUR FEELINGS FOR ME ARE WRITTEN ALL OVER YOUR FACE.
HUH?!


SHWP!
M-MY FACE ISN'T THAT EASY TO READ, IS IT?!
I suppose there is no hiding it.
NO.
DO NOT GIVE IT ANOTHER THOUGHT.
It is making me blush.
KEEP IT JUST BETWEEN US.
I WANT THAT LOOK TO BE MINE ALONE.
PSHHH
IT SEEMS YOU'RE ENJOYING MY TORMENT, LADY ALICE.
BLUUUUSH


YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE...
WHO CAN MAKE ME FEEL SUCH WARMTH.
WE MUST KEEP OUR SECRET.
SO THAT WE CAN STAY TOGETHER.
THAT IS WHY...
....


WE ARE HOME, MISS SMITH.
HANAKO WILL BE RETURN-ING TO DUTY, STARTING TODAY.
YES, MISS.
I HAD NOT EXPECTED YOU TO RETURN TOGETHER.
WE RAN INTO ONE ANOTHER IN LONDON.
HANAKO...
ONCE YOU HAVE PUT YOUR THINGS AWAY, PLEASE COME TO MY ROOM.
YES, MISS.
I WILL BE THERE AS SOON AS I CHANGE.


No...
THERE IS NO NEED TO HURRY.
AFTER ALL, YOU MIGHT FIND THE CORSET A CHALLENGE, AFTER SO LONG WITHOUT IT.
SQUEEZE
P-PLEASE DON'T SQUEEZE ME THERE!
SQUEEZE
SQUEEZE
SQUEEZE
SQUEEZE
SQUEEZE
SQUEEZE
SQUEEZE
SQUEEZE
SQUEEZE
Oh my.
HEE HEE HEE! ☆
So soft!


HOW WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR HAIR TODAY?
THE USUAL, IF YOU PLEASE.
Yes, m'lady.
......
SEEING YOU DRESSED THIS WAY COMFORTS ME SOME-HOW.


IT PUTS ME AT EASE AS WELL.
THIS UNIFORM GRANTS ME PER-MISSION TO BE BY YOUR SIDE.
AND YET, IT IS STRAN-GE...
NO MATTER WHAT YOU WEAR, WHO YOU ARE DOES NOT CHANGE.
I WONDER HOW YOUR PARENTS FEEL ABOUT MY RETURN.
WE WILL HAVE TO BE ESPECIALLY CAREFUL WITH MOTHER.
WE MUST ACT ENTIRELY THE PART OF A NOBLE WOMAN AND HER MAID.


WE HAVE GROWN CLOSER...
BUT WE ARE STILL FRIENDS, AS WELL.
I HAVE NO DOUBT WE CAN PLAY THE PART.
AND, WHEN WE ARE ALONE, WE MAY BARE OUR TRUE SELVES.
HANAKO ...
WOULD YOU UNDO MY TOP BUTTON?
WHA?!


?
I MERELY WISH TO CHANGE INTO MY EVENING DRESS.
AH!
YOU UNDERSTAND THAT I WAS USING "BARE" FIGURATIVELY, DO YOU NOT?
Ah...!
OF...
OF COURSE I DO!
OH, HANAKO...
I WOULD NOT DREAM OF RUSHING.
Though, I suppose I did kiss you...
Eeeek!
I-I'M TERRIBLY SORRY...!


SHFF
YOU ARE SIMPLY ADORABLE...
Hee hee!
Hee hee!


FWP
?
SEE YOU AFTER DINNER, THEN.
WAIT A MOMENT.
I HAVE SOMETHING I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU.
HERE YOU ARE.
?
...!


VICTOR FRANK
Goodbye, my Rose Garden
LADY ALICE, THIS IS ...!
VICTOR'S NEWEST WORK.
SEE THAT YOU KEEP IT OUT OF SIGHT UNTIL ITS PUBLICATION.
!
plip
plip
plip


WHY ARE YOU CRYING?
I thought you would be pleased.
plip
plip
plip
B-BE-CAUSE...
HIC!
HIC!
IT HAS FINALLY SUNK IN...
YOU REALLY ARE VICTOR.
GOOD-NESS, NOW.
ALL I SEEM TO DO IS MAKE YOU CRY.



NO...
THESE ARE TEARS OF JOY.
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO THANK YOU.
YOUR STORIES GUIDED ME.
THANK YOU FOR THE LIGHT YOU GAVE TO ME...



"BELIEF WITHOUT ACTION IS JUST FANTASY."
THOSE WORDS LIFTED ME UP SO MANY TIMES.
WHENEVER I FOUND MYSELF ON THE BRINK OF DESPAIR ...
THEY GAVE ME STRENGTH. REMINDED ME I STILL HAD THINGS LEFT TO DO.
THOSE WERE WORDS OF **REPRIMAND** TO MYSELF.
MY OWN BELIEFS LACKED ACTION.
I COULD ACCOMPLISH NOTHING ON MY OWN.
I WAS TERRIFIED YOU WOULD THINK IT WAS NONSENSE. JUST IDEALISM AND DREAMS.


YOU ARE A STRONG WOMAN, WHO CROSSED THE OCEAN ON THE STRENGTH OF HER BELIEFS.
I AM NOT WORTHY OF THAT SORT OF RESPECT.
ARE YOU DISAPPOINTED, NOW THAT YOU KNOW THE TRUTH?
NO...
YOUR WORDS ARE POWERFUL. THEY SPURRED ME ON.
Squeeze
THAT IS ITS OWN KIND OF ACTION-- ITS OWN KIND OF CONVICTION.


THANK YOU, HANAKO.
HAVE YOU FALLEN FOR ME YET?
OH... DON'T TEASE.
Hee hee!
Hee hee!
NOK NOK
KA-CHAK
JUMP
LADY ALICE...


LORD EDWARD IS WAITING IN THE LIBRARY.
EDWARD ...?
HELLO, ALICE.
ED-WARD.
THANK YOU FOR HOSTING HANAKO.
I WAS JUST TELLING HER WE SHOULD WRITE YOU A THANK YOU NOTE.
A THANK YOU NOTE ...
INSTEAD OF COMING TO SEE ME IN PERSON?


WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
NOTHING IN PARTICULAR.
I MERELY WISH TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH YOU.
WHY HAVE YOU COME TODAY?
CAN I NOT CALL ON YOU WITHOUT WANTING SOME-THING?
Ah!
THAT IS NOT WHAT I MEANT...
YOUR PARENTS INVITED ME TO DINNER...
AS THANKS FOR HOSTING YOUR MAID.
TNK


BUT ALICE...
I SHOULD NOT NEED A REASON TO SEE YOU.
DO YOU NOT FEEL THE SAME?
I...
IS IT NOT TIME TO DISCUSS OUR FUTURE?
....


ALICE...
MARRY ME.


MARRY YOU?
EDWARD, WHAT IS THIS...?
WE HAVE NO REASON TO RUSH INTO THIS...
STRETCH IT OUT AS LONG AS YOU LIKE. MY FEELINGS WILL NOT CHANGE.
ALICE...
WOULD YOU CALL OFF OUR ENGAGE-MENT?
...!


EDWARD, THAT IS NOT...!
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF TROUBLING YOU.
BUT IT IS TIME TO GIVE SERIOUS THOUGHT TO OUR RELATION-SHIP.
I KNOW THAT YOU MUST UNDERSTAND...
WHY YOUR MOTHER SENT THAT MAID AWAY.
....
I SHALL EXPECT YOUR ANSWER ...
IN ONE WEEK'S TIME.

{ Chapter 15 }

The Pulse of the Cocoon and the Wind That Breaks It




LADY ALICE?
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN WITH LORD EDWARD?
HANAKO ...
HE ASKED ME TO MARRY HIM.


......
COULD YOU TURN HIM DOWN?
IMPOSSIBLE...
UNLIKE ME, EDWARD HAS DONE NOTHING WRONG...
IF I REFUSE HIS OFFER, HE WILL SUSPECT THAT THE RUMORS ARE TRUE.
I CANNOT IMAGINE WHAT THAT WOULD DO...
TO MY FAMILY'S REPUTATION ...!


WHAT SHOULD I DO?
......
SQUEEZE
THAT ICY LOOK LORD EDWARD GAVE ME, BACK IN HAST-INGS...
I'M SURE HE WAS TRYING TO DISCOURAGE US FROM BEING TOGETHER.
IF I MARRY HIM, WILL YOU REMAIN BY MY SIDE?


I MAY BE ABLE TO PROTECT HER IF I LET HER GO.
BUT...
IF IT IS YOUR WISH...
I WILL REMAIN.
ALWAYS.


IS IT TRUE THAT LADY ALICE IS TO BE MARRIED?!
THE LADY OF THE MANOR SAYS LORD EDWARD IS AWAITING HER RESPONSE.
THEY MAKE A PERFECT COUPLE! OH, THERE'S NO WAY SHE COULD REFUSE!
My!
I KNEW THIS DAY WOULD COME...
OH, I DO HOPE THEY'LL HAVE A LOVELY SPRING CER-EMONY, FILLED WITH FLOW-ERS!
CHATTER
CHATTER
......
SAY, HANAKO!
WHAT SORT OF DRESS WILL LADY ALICE WEAR?!
CLAP! CLAP!
ALL RIGHT, ENOUGH CHATTER!


EEK!
MAGGIE! HAVE YOU FINISHED ORGANIZING THE CUPBOARD?
I TOLD YOU TO FINISH THAT TODAY!
AND JENNY! BACK TO THE KITCHEN!
MISS TRACY IS LOOKING FOR YOU!
CLATTER
CLAP!
CLAP!
CLATTER
Sigh...
MY GOODNESS.
GIVE THEM A SEED OF GOSSIP AND THEY'LL SOW FOR HOURS.
MISS SMITH...
Oh...
THANK YOU...
WHATEVER DO YOU MEAN?
I WAS JUST SETTING THEM ABOUT THEIR WORK.
OH, AND THIS **LETTER** ARRIVED FOR YOU.
A LETTER?


Marie Lewis,
Susanne Roussel
Dear Miss Hanako...
I hope you've returned safely to Rose Barrow.
Let's write to her!
It was not my intention to write so soon...
but Marie would not let me be until the pen was in my hand.
Hee hee!
SUSANNE IS BLUNT AS EVER.


I am sure you are already aware...
but the path ahead of you is treacherous.
If you are not swayed by the words of others...
then I know you will not suffer at heart.
There is only one thing I want to tell you.
then I know you will not suff
There is only one thing I want to tell you.
when you reach the limits of your
Someday, when you reach the limits of your suffering...
and find yourself lonely, without a port in the storm...
do not forget that Marie and I are here in Hastings, waiting for you.


Your friend,
Susanne Roussel
Your friend...
Susanne Roussel
SUSAN-NE...
HOW DID YOU...
BREAK FREE OF YOUR OWN HEART-ACHE?
OR ARE YOU ...
ITS PRISONER TO THIS DAY?
IF MY HEART IS TO SPEND THE REST OF MY DAYS AS A PRISONER...
THEN I SHOULD...



I AM WORN OUT...
YOU'VE HAD A LONG DAY.
YES...
AT DINNER, ALL ANYONE SPOKE ABOUT WAS THE WED-DING.
WHAT KIND OF DRESS I WOULD WEAR...
WHETHER EDWARD WOULD SELL HIS MANOR AND WOULD WE MOVE SOME-WHERE NEW...
SQUEEZE
MY HEAD IS SPIN-NING...


LADY ALICE...
IT IS ODD.
I FEEL AT PEACE IN YOUR ARMS.
LIKE I'M IN THE EMBRACE OF A COCOON.
YOU SAID THAT ABOUT THE ROSE GARDEN AS WELL.
I'M HAPPY TO BE COMPARED...
TO SUCH A BEAUTIFUL PLACE.
Sniff
Sniff
THAT IS RIGHT.
YOU ARE MY OWN ROSE GARDEN.


......
LADY ALICE...
ARE YOU SLEEPING WELL?
NO.
TOMORROW, EDWARD SHALL BE HERE FOR MY ANSWER.
WHEN I THINK ABOUT THAT...
I GET SO ANXIOUS, I CANNOT SLEEP.


IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO?
TELL ME A STORY FROM YOUR PAST.
PERHAPS IT SHALL HELP ME SLEEP.
YES, THERE IS...
A STORY...?
Hmm...
PERHAPS I CAN TELL YOU ABOUT THE CAT FROM MY CHILD-HOOD.



HIS NAME WAS ICHI.
HE WAS A CUTE LITTLE CALICO CAT.
A calico cat?
Oh, that means his fur had three colors.
ONE NIGHT, BENEATH A HAZY FULL MOON...
I COULDN'T SLEEP. I WAS YOUNG AT THE TIME.
THE MOON ILLUMINATED THE WEEPING WILLOW, SWAYING IN THE BREEZE.
IT LOOKED LIKE SOMETHING NOT OF THIS WORLD.
I CRIED, THINKING IT WAS AN ANGEL OF DEATH.
BUT THEN ICHI APPEARED AT MY SIDE...
AS I LAY TREMBLING AND ALONE IN THE DARKNESS.


HE DIDN'T SEEM TO NOTICE THAT DARK ANGEL.
HE CHASED ALL MY FEARS AWAY WITH HIS TINY BODY.
HE STOOD LIKE A SILENT SENTINEL AT MY SIDE.
I CUDDLED ICHI'S SOFT BODY TO MY EAR...
AND THE SOUND OF HIS PURRING AND HIS HEARTBEAT...
WAS STRANGELY...
ENOUGH TO PUT ME AT EASE.
IT MADE ME REALIZE I WASN'T ALONE.


BEFORE I KNEW IT, I DRIFTED OFF TO SLEEP.
AND FROM THAT DAY ON, I NO LONGER FEARED THE ANGEL OF DEATH IN THE WIL-LOW.
LADY ALICE...?
CAN YOU HEAR IT?
MY HEART-BEAT.


I CAN HEAR IT...
THANK YOU...
HANAKO...
SUU
!


ALL I CAN DO IS REMAIN BY HER SIDE.
THAT IS WHAT I AM MEANT FOR.
NO ONE WILL TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME...
......
SWEET DREAMS...
LADY ALICE.


WHAT OF LORD EDWARD?
I ESCORTED HIM TO THE DRAWING ROOM.
IT SEEMS THAT HE AND THE EARL WILL BE GOING OUT LATER.
......
HANAKO?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? YOU LOOK UNWELL...
AH, YES.
THE BOOK I WAS READING LAST NIGHT WAS SO GOOD, I BARELY GOT ANY SLEEP!
I SEE...


PLEASE DON'T PUSH YOUR-SELF TOO HARD!
PARDON ME, MISS KUJOU.
MIGHT I HAVE A MOMENT?
YES.
HOW MAY I HELP YOU?
I WONDER IF YOU MIGHT ACCOMPANY ME TO THE GARDEN.


WELL THEN...
IT APPEARS YOU HAVE RETURNED TO YOUR DUTIES.
LORD EDWARD...
THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN FOR--
LET US DISPENSE WITH THE FORCED PLEASANTRIES.
HOW IS ALICE?
I AM AFRAID SHE HAS HAD DIFFICULTY SLEEPING.


I SEE.
IT IS BECAUSE SHE LOVES YOU, ISN'T IT?
TH...!
THAT'S NOT TRUE...!
SHE...!
YOU NEED NOT LIE TO ME.


ALICE IS NOT A FRIVOLOUS WOMAN.
SHE WOULD NOT KISS JUST ANYONE.
SO, THE RUMORS ARE TRUE.
REGARDLESS, IT WILL NOT CHANGE HOW I FEEL.
THEN...
WHY ARE YOU PURSUING THIS MARRIAGE?!
YOU KNOW SHE CANNOT REFUSE!
WHY WOULD YOU KNOWINGLY CAUSE HER PAIN?!


DO NOT MISUN-DER-STAND ME.
I SHALL NOT FORCE HER.
IF ALICE WISHES TO CANCEL OUR ENGAGE-MENT...
I WILL ABIDE BY HER WISHES.
AND IF SHE FEARS FOR HER REPUTATION BECAUSE SHE CANCELS OUR ENGAGEMENT...
I SHALL STAND BY HER, AS HER FAITHFUL FRIEND.
HOW-EVER...
ONLY ON ONE CONDITION.


REGARDLESS OF WHETHER WE MARRY...
YOU ARE TO LEAVE.
IF YOU REFUSE...
I WILL EXPOSE THE TRUTH.
THE WHOLE WORLD SHALL KNOW ABOUT HER.


……
"IF IT IS YOUR WISH.
"I WILL REMAIN. ALWAYS."
I KNOW IT IS CRUEL…
TO SAY THAT HAVING HER HERE…
IS ENOUGH FOR ME.


"BUT HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THE PAIN YOU WILL CAUSE HER...
"SO LONG AS YOU LIVE AS A NOBLE-WOMAN?"
I WANT TO PROTECT HANAKO AND MY FAMILY.
THAT IS ALL I WANT.
HANAKO...
FORGIVE ME...
SO WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT?

{ Chapter 16 }
My One and Only Wish




YOU ARE TO LEAVE.
IF YOU REFUSE...
I WILL EXPOSE THE TRUTH.
THE WHOLE WORLD SHALL KNOW ABOUT HER.
......
I CANNOT ACCEPT THAT!
LADY ALICE NEEDS SOMEONE WHO ACCEPTS HER AND SUPPORTS HER.
THAT IS MY DUTY.


IF YOU GENUINELY CARE ABOUT HER--
IF YOU GENUINELY CARE...
THEN WHY CAN YOU NOT SEE THAT WHAT TRULY WORRIES HER...
IS PROTECTING HER FAMILY'S HONOR?
ALICE'S HAPPINESS LIES NOT IN SHAMING HERSELF... BUT IN BEING MY WIFE.
THE WIFE OF AN EARL. MOTHER TO A RESPECTABLE LINEAGE.
EVEN IF SHE DOES NOT LOVE ME...
ONCE SHE HAS CHILDREN, SHE WILL REALIZE TRUE HAPPINESS.


...!
HOW CAN YOU SAY SUCH A THING?!
SOMEDAY, SHE SHALL REALIZE THAT FALLING IN LOVE WITH A WOMAN WAS A DELUSION.
THEN I SHALL ASK YOU THIS.
HOW CAN SOMEONE LIKE YOU, WITH NO STATUS NOR PRESTIGE...
HOPE TO OFFER HER HAPPINESS?
HER NOBLE BIRTH IS CAUSING HER NOTHING BUT PAIN.
HOW CAN YOU CALL THAT HAPPINESS?


I CAN SHIELD HER FROM THE HARSH GAZE OF SOCIETY.
I CAN GIVE HER A LIFE OF COMFORT AND PEACE.
TO THINK THAT A SERVANT...
BELIEVES SHE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN MAKE ALICE HAPPY?
YOUR ARROGANCE IS LAUGHABLE.


YOU ARE THE BLACK SPOT IN THIS ROSE GARDEN...
YOUR VERY PRESENCE IS DEVOURING EVERYTHING SHE LOVES.
I WILL REMOVE THE BLIGHT THAT THREATENS HER AND HER FAMILY.
IT IS FOR HER OWN GOOD.


IF YOU TRULY LOVE ALICE...
THEN YOU MUST UNDER-STAND....
WHAT IS BEST FOR HER.
IF SHE AGREES TO MARRY ME, THEN...
ON THE DAY OF OUR WEDDING...
YOU SHALL LEAVE.
....


I AM TOLD THAT YOU HAVE NOT BEEN SLEEPING WELL.
I AM SORRY TO HEAR IT.
THERE IS NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE.
YOU PROPOSED TO ME TO PRESERVE MY FAMILY'S REPUTATION.
DEAR EDWARD.
IF ONLY I LOVED YOU...
THEN THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN THE PERFECT LOVE STORY.


ALICE...
I KNOW YOU DO NOT FEEL FOR ME.
THAT DOES NOT MATTER.
I CAN PROTECT YOU, MY LOVE, AND YOUR FAMILY'S GOOD NAME...
I BEG OF YOU, ALICE...
MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE.



....
YES...
I KNOW WHAT IS AT STAKE.
HE THREATENED TO REVEAL LADY ALICE'S SECRETS.
AND YET, I CAN TELL THAT HE LOVES HER.
HE WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING TO HARM HER--NOT FOR NOW, AT LEAST.


BUT...
AN UNREQUITED LOVE...
CAN TURN READILY TO HATE.
I CANNOT DO IT.
I CAN'T LEAVE HER ALONE HERE.
BUT WHAT SHALL I DO?
HOW CAN I REMAIN AT HER SIDE?
CREAK...


HANAKO...
THERE YOU ARE.
LADY ALICE...
MY CHEST ACHES.
I CAN'T SPEAK.
I KNOW I HAVE TO ASK HER...
HOW SHE RESPONDED TO LORD EDWARD.


HAVE YOU...
BEGUN READING THAT?
WHAT ...?
OH, YES!
ALTHOUGH I STILL HAVEN'T FINISHED IT.
BUT THE WAY THE PROTAGONIST BREAKS FREE FROM THE CONFINES OF HER MANSION...
TO DISPEL THE FALSE MURDER CHARGES, TO PROVE THE INNOCENCE OF THE ONE THAT SHE LOVES...
MY HEART WON'T STOP POUNDING.
Uhm...
DID YOU...
DID YOU BASE THESE CHARACTERS...
ON YOU AND MS. ELIZA?


NO.
NOT QUITE.
THE MAIN CHARACTER DOES WHAT I WISH I COULD.
SHE IS WHO I WISH I WAS.
MY HEART'S DEEPEST DESIRE...
SO, NO.
SHE IS NOT ME.
ALSO, MS. ELIZA NEVER MURDERED ANYONE.
YES, OF COURSE.


ACTUALLY, WHILE I WAS WRITING THIS...
I WAS THINKING OF YOU.
ME...?


THE ROSE GARDEN IS MY SHELTER. I COULD NEVER LEAVE IT.
BUT YOU? YOU HAVE TRAVELED ACROSS OCEANS...
I WISH I WERE LIKE YOU.
I SAID THAT YOU BRING LIGHT INTO MY WORK.
TO ME, YOU ARE THE SUN ITSELF.
LADY ALICE...


AND, AT THE END OF THE STO-RY--
WAIT! NO! STOP!
WAIT, PLEASE!
I'M STILL READING IT!
NOOO! NOOO!
OH DEAR!
I APOLOGIZE.
I WISH TO SEE THE CHERRY BLOS-SOMS OF YOUR COUNTRY...
WITH MY OWN EYES.
JUST LIKE MY PROTAGO-NIST.


BUT... YOU BELIEVE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE?
YOU MUST NOT GIVE UP, LADY ALICE!
I AM...
AFRAID IT IS TOO LATE.
I HAVE AGREED TO MARRY EDWARD.


I CANNOT ESCAPE THIS COCOON...
BUT I CAN PROTECT MY FAMILY'S NAME.
SO LONG AS YOU REMAIN WITH ME, I WILL BE FINE.
FORGIVE ME, HANAKO...
CAN YOU CONTINUE TO LIVE HERE, IN THIS COCOON OF ROSES...?


I CANNOT, LADY ALICE.
IF YOU MARRY HIM...
THEN I AM TO LEAVE THIS HOUSE.
...!
EDWARD SAID THAT...?!
HE SAID I WAS THE BLACK SPOT. A DISEASE.
REGARD-LESS OF YOUR FEELINGS...
HE WILL REMOVE ME TO PROTECT YOU.


BUT YOU PROMISED...
THAT YOU WOULD ALWAYS BE AT MY SIDE!
YES, LADY ALICE.
I DID NOT LIE, AND I DO NOT INTEND TO DECEIVE YOU.
EVEN IF I CANNOT REMAIN HERE...
I CAN STILL BE WITH YOU.
LADY ALICE...


WON'T YOU COME SEE THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS WITH ME?
THE TWO OF US COULD TAKE A JOURNEY. FAR, FAR AWAY.
I CANNOT...
THEY WOULD NEVER ALLOW IT.


YOU DON'T NEED THEIR PERMISSION.
LADY ALICE...
WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WANT?


A SPRING CEREMONY WILL DO NICELY.
THAT SOUNDS WON-DERFUL!
WE SHALL INFORM THE PRIEST TOMOR-ROW.
ARE YOU EXCITED, ALICE?
YOU DO NOT APPEAR TO BE.
THAT IS NOT TRUE.
PLEASE, BE HAPPY FOR ME.
Sigh
OH, ALICE...



I KNOW YOU. YOU ALWAYS FORCE A SMILE...
BUT YOU ARE SO EASY TO READ.
DO NOT UNDERES-TIMATE MY SISTERLY INTUITION.
ALSO, "FAMILY HONOR" IS SO OUT OF FASHION.
LATELY, I HAVE BECOME INTERESTED IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PANK-HURSTS.
I AM SUPPORTING THEIR EFFORTS IN SECRET.
NESTLES MILK
EFFORTS? DO YOU MEAN WOMEN'S SUF-FRAGE?
THAT'S RIGHT.
I AM SURE YOU AGREE WITH THEIR CAUSE, DON'T YOU?
Do not tell Father and the others, all right?


WHY WOULD YOU TELL ME THAT...?
HMM... LET ME SEE.
SO THAT YOU KNOW THAT, EVEN IF YOU SEND EVERYONE INTO SHOCK, IT WILL BE FINE.
WE CAN DO IT TOGETHER AND DOUBLE THE CHAOS.
AS THE SAYING GOES, "IF YOU WANT TO HIDE A LEAF, MAKE A PILE OF LEAVES."
OH, JANE!
YOU ARE A NAUGHTY GIRL!
I AM.
WE ARE BOTH UNIQUE AS FLOWERS.
IT IS TRULY A SHAME WE ARE FORCED TO PLAY THE PART OF WELL-BEHAVED NOBLE GIRLS.


THAT IS WHY, DEAR SISTER...
YOU DO NOT **ALWAYS** HAVE TO BE THE GOOD GIRL.
WE ARE NOT THE DELICATE OBEDIENT FLOWERS THAT PEOPLE EXPECT US TO BE.
JANE...
LADY JANE IS SUPPORTING WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE?
YES, I WAS QUITE SURPRISED...
I ONLY HOPE SHE DOES NOT GET HURT.


STILL, THAT'S INCRED-IBLE.
I'VE HARDLY HAD A CHANCE TO SPEAK WITH HER. NOW I'M DISAPPOINT-ED.
ギュッ
SQUEEZE
......
HANAKO...
YOU ARE MY MAID.
ARE YOU... JEALOUS?
Aha ha!
YES.
SQUEEZE
SQUEEZE
WHAT?!


WHAT?
No...
THMP
THMP
Is that so wrong?
I JUST NEVER EXPECTED SUCH VIGOROUS AGREEMENT.
I WANT US...
TO ALWAYS BE TOGETHER LIKE THIS...


I LOVE MY FAMILY.
FATHER AND MOTHER... JANE, MARGARET, AND LITTLE MARY...
I DON'T WANT THEM TO BE EMBROILED IN SCANDAL...
BUT...
IF I LOST YOU, MY SUN...
IT WOULD KILL MY HEART. SHUT IT AWAY FOREVER.
I WOULD BE SEALED INSIDE THIS LONELI-NESS.
MY LIFE WOULD HAVE NO MEANING.


THINKING BACK NOW...
IT WAS HER HAND THAT DREW ME TO HER.
LADY ALICE...
YOU ASKED ME WHAT I WISHED FOR.
I KNOW WHAT IT IS.
I HAVE BUT ONE WISH...


THAT DELICATE, FAIR HAND WAS MY SALVATION.
HANAKO...
AT THE SAME TIME...
KILL ME.
IT WAS ALSO THE SPIDER'S THREAD THAT BOUND ME.

Goodbye,
my Rose Garden




YOU ARE... NO BLACK SPOT.
YOU ARE A BEAUTIFUL ROSE, REFLECTING THE LIGHT.
I AM THE ONLY BLACK SPOT HERE.
EVERYONE KNOWS IT.
AND YET THEY CONTINUE SACRIFICING THE ROSES TO PROTECT ME.
WE MUST PUT AN END TO IT.


{ Final Chapter }
Goodbye, My Rose Garden
PLEASE, HANAKO.
KILL ME.


LADY ALICE...
EVEN IF WE'RE SENT TO OPPOSITE ENDS OF THE EARTH...
BOOKS WILL ALWAYS BRIDGE THE DIVIDE BETWEEN US.
I PROMISE TO BECOME AN AUTHOR...
AND SEND YOU MY STORIES...
AND THINK OF YOU...
AND TO FOLLOW YOUR WORKS...
SURELY, THAT IS JUST LIKE...
BEING TOGETHER.


IF YOU SAY THAT I'M A ROSE...
THEN YOU ARE THE SUN THAT WARMS ME.
I NEED YOU NOW, MORE THAN EVER.
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT, HANAKO?
YOU SAID THAT YOU LOVED ME!
WHEN I WAS STAYING IN HASTINGS...
SUSANNE TOLD ME ABOUT THE STORY "MARTHA'S LADY"...


A MAID NAMED MARTHA CONTINUES TO LOVE HER MISTRESS FOR DE-CADES...
TO THE POINT WHERE IT ALMOST BREAKS HER HEART.
SHE CARRIED ON LOVING DESPITE IT, WITH HER WHOLE HEART.
SUSANNE BELIEVED IT WAS A CRUEL STORY.
BUT...
EVEN IF I COULD NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN...
I...
I WOULD STILL BE HAPPY THAT MY STORY...
HAD YOU IN IT. SOMEONE THAT I LOVE AS MUCH AS I LOVE YOU.


BEING HERE...
BEING ALONE WITH YOU...
IT HAS BROUGHT JOY INTO MY LIFE.
HANAKO...


IF YOU WILL CONTINUE LOVING ME...
THEN I SHALL LIVE DREAMING OF THE DAY I CAN RETURN THAT LOVE.
PLEASE...
STAY BY MY SIDE, AT LEAST UNTIL MY WEDDING DAY.
YES...
LADY ALICE.
IF THAT IS YOUR WISH.

WOW! IS THAT...
LADY ALICE'S WEDDING DRESS?!
IT IS.
MISS KUJOU, WHERE SHALL WE DO THE ALTERATIONS?
WOOW
OH...
I'LL FETCH LADY ALICE.
PLEASE, WAIT IN THE DRESSING ROOM...
JOLT
I-IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?
OH DEAR...
SHE HAS A SPECK OF DUST IN HER EYE.
FIDGET
FIDGET
I CAN MANAGE FROM HERE, HANAKO.
TAKE SOME TIME.
I-I'M SORRY...


MY CHEST HURTS...
IT'S HARD TO BREATHE.
SUSANNE WAS RIGHT.
THIS IS TOO CRUEL.
I NEED TO WRITE MY STORY.
THAT IS THE ONLY WAY...
I CAN REMAIN WITH HER.


THE ROSES WILL BE IN BLOOM SOON.
YOU'RE RIGHT...
THE DAY WE MUST PART IS APPROACHING.
HANAKO IS ACTING SO BRAVELY, BUT...


HANAKO...
YOU LOOK UNWELL.
I DIDN'T GET ENOUGH SLEEP LAST NIGHT, THAT'S ALL.
ACTUALLY, I'M WRITING A NEW STORY.
OH... WHAT IS IT ABOUT?
IT'S A SECRET, FOR NOW.
THAT DAY I RUSHED OUT FOR INK AND PAPER...
I WANTED TO WRITE A STORY...
THAT ENCOMPASSED EVERYTHING YOU TAUGHT ME.
Goodbye, my Rose Garden


I PROMISED THAT I WOULD START WRITING.
I WILL SEND IT TO YOU WHEN IT'S WRITTEN.
SHE HAS BEEN CRYING...
SO PLEASE... BE PATIENT.
YES...
I SHALL LOOK FORWARD TO IT.
EVEN NOW, WHEN HANAKO IS IN DARK-NESS...
SHE HAS LATCHED ONTO THAT SMALLEST CHINK OF LIGHT.
SHE IS STILL FIGHTING.



IF SHE CAN DO THAT...
THEN I...
I MUST PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE, AS WELL.
Clench
I WANT...
TO BECOME SOMEONE WORTHY OF HER.



ARE THE FLOWERS ALL RIGHT HERE?
YES! PERFECT!
AT LAST! LADY ALICE IS GETTING MARRIED!
I'M SURE SHE'LL LOOK STUNNING IN HER DRESS.
BUT IT'S SAD THAT HANAKO IS LEAVING.
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER
APPARENTLY HER CONTRACT WAS ONLY UNTIL LADY ALICE'S WEDDING DAY.
Ohh...
I GUESS THAT MEANS THE RUMORS ABOUT HER WERE SIMPLY THAT.
AH!
SPEAKING OF RUMORS...
HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT LADY JANE?


THERE IS A RUMOR THAT SHE'S BEEN SPENDING TIME WITH THE PANKHURSTS.
You don't mean...
THE ONES PUSHING FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE?
ISN'T THAT DANGEROUS?
I'm worried...
I'm rooting for her!
BUT SURELY ONLY NOBLEWOMEN WILL GET THE RIGHT TO VOTE.
I DOUBT IT HAS ANY BEARING ON WOMEN LIKE US.
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? TIMES ARE CHANGING!
WHO KNOWS WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS?
YOU'RE RIGHT.
I HOPE THAT THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT!


I'VE PACKED EVERYTHING YOU'LL NEED FOR YOUR HONEY-MOON.
THANK YOU...
HAVE YOU FINISHED PACKING YOUR THINGS AS WELL?
YES. ALMOST.
WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW?
WELL...
I'LL MAKE MY WAY BACK TO JAPAN...
STOPPING IN SOME OTHER PLACES ALONG THE WAY.



THANKS TO THE MONEY I SAVED UP HERE...
I CAN TRAVEL THE WORLD AND LEARN NEW THINGS.
I SEE...
I'LL BE SURE TO SEND LETTERS TO YOUR EDITOR...
ALONG WITH MY MANUSCRIPT.
ARE YOU REALLY GOING BACK TO JAPAN?
WHY DO YOU NOT STAY WITH SUSANNE AND MARIE IN HASTINGS FOR A WHILE?
I CAN'T.
LADY ALICE...


SO LONG AS I AM CLOSE TO YOU...
MY HEART WILL NEVER HEAL.
I WILL TELL YOU STORIES FROM AFAR.
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO TO FEEL CLOSER TO ME IS OPEN A BOOK.
......!


I LOVE YOU...
HANAKO!
I LOVE YOU MOST IN ALL THE WORLD!
GOOD-BYE...
LADY ALICE.


My!
YOU LOOK STUNNING, ALICE.
LIKE A DREAM.
FATHER, MOTHER...
THANK YOU FOR EVERY-THING.
Hee hee!
NOW, NOW...
YOU SHALL ALWAYS BE OUR DAUGHTER.
AND YOU WILL ALWAYS BE MY BIG SISTER, RIGHT?
AWW!
NO FAIR, MARY!
MARGA-RET...
MARY...
Squeeze
I SHALL ALWAYS LOVE YOU.


JANE...
HM?
You want to hug as well?
MAY WE SPEAK ALONE FOR A MOMENT?
What?
HANAKO, YOU ARE REALLY LEAVING?
We'll miss you!
WE'LL WRITE TO YOU, SO PLEASE WRITE BACK!
COME BACK AND SEE US!
Promise us!
YOU DOLT.
SHE WON'T LIVE CLOSE ENOUGH TO VISIT.


HEY, THE CARRIAGES ARE LEAVING.
AWW!
OH NO, WE NEED TO HURRY!
SEE YOU, HANAKO!
SQUEEZE
CLATTER
Haah...
IT'S YOUR LAST DAY, AND THEY'RE ALL SO...
CLATTER
HANAKO...
DO YOU REALLY WANT TO MISS THE WEDDING?
YES.
AMELIA WILL GET LADY ALICE READY FOR THE CER-EMONY.
I NEED TO MAKE MY OWN PREPARA-TIONS.


MISS SMITH...
I'M RELYING ON YOU TO LOOK AFTER LADY ALICE.
OF COURSE.
YA! AA!


ALICE...
I AM SO HAPPY YOU ARE HERE.
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER
I HAVE HAD COUNTLESS NIGHTMARES WHERE YOU LEAVE ME AT THE ALTAR.
IF WE COULD PLEASE HAVE YOUR SILENCE.
THE CEREMONY IS ABOUT TO BEGIN.


DO YOU, ALICE DOUG-LAS...
TAKE EDWARD WALLACE TO BE YOUR LAWFULLY WEDDED HUSBAND?
TO HAVE AND TO HOLD, FROM THIS DAY FORWARD, FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE...
FOR RICHER AND FOR POORER...
IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH...
TO CHERISH, FOR AS LONG AS YOU BOTH SHALL LIVE, UNTIL DEATH DO YOU PART?


NO.
ALICE ...?!
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
I AM CERTAIN YOU HAVE ALL HEARD...
THE RUMORS ABOUT ME.
I DO NOT.
THEY ARE TRUE.


I AM WORN DOWN FROM WEARING THE SAME MASK ALL MY LIFE.
I WAS READY TO DIE.
THERE IS A WOMAN...
WHOSE LIGHT BROKE THROUGH THE CRACKS IN MY DISGUISE.
HOW-EVER...
I AM HERE TO DECLARE BEFORE YOU ALL...
THAT I HAVE DESTROYED THAT MASK OF MYSELF.


Plip
I NEED TO LEAVE.
BEFORE EVERYONE ELSE RETURNS.
OH, GOOD.
I MADE IT IN TIME.

...?!
LADY ALICE?!
WH
WHY...?
YOUR WEDDING...?
I TOLD THEM THAT I LOVED YOU!
AND I FLED.
WHA...
WHA-AT?!


I LOVE YOUR HONEST EYES...
I LOVE YOUR SINCERITY...
AND HOW PEACEFUL I FEEL IN YOUR ARMS.
I LOVE THE SWEET FACES THAT YOU MAKE...
AND THAT YOU CRY AS MUCH AS I DO.
I...
I'M NOT THAT BAD!
Sniffle
Sniffle
Sniffle
BUT WHAT I LOVE MOST OF ALL...
IS YOUR HEART, SHINING AND RADIANT.
MORE THAN ANYTHING IN THE WORLD.
HANAKO...
I LOVE YOU.


I...
I LOVE YOU, TOO.
IF IT IS YOUR WISH...
THEN I WILL REMAIN BY YOUR SIDE...
FOREVER.
LET'S LEAVE TOGETHER...
AND WEAVE A STORY ALL OUR OWN.


YES...
WE SHOULD GO.
SQUEEZE
IT IS FINALLY TIME TO LEAVE...
MY BELOVED ROSE GARDEN.
THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING...
MY COCOON.


NOW THEN...
LET US GO.
GOOD-BYE...
MY ROSE GARDEN.



Thank you so much for reading to the conclusion of this tale.

I feel sad that I have finished, but relieved that Alice and Hanako could reach the end hand in hand.

Someday, if the opportunity presents itself, I would love to tell the story of what happens after they say farewell to the rose garden (and the story of what happens with Susanne and Marie!).

I hope that we can meet in the pages of another tale someday.

VICTOR FRANKS

Goodbye, my Rose Garden

JBP

SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

Goodbye, *my* Rose Garden

story and art by **DR. PEPPERCO**

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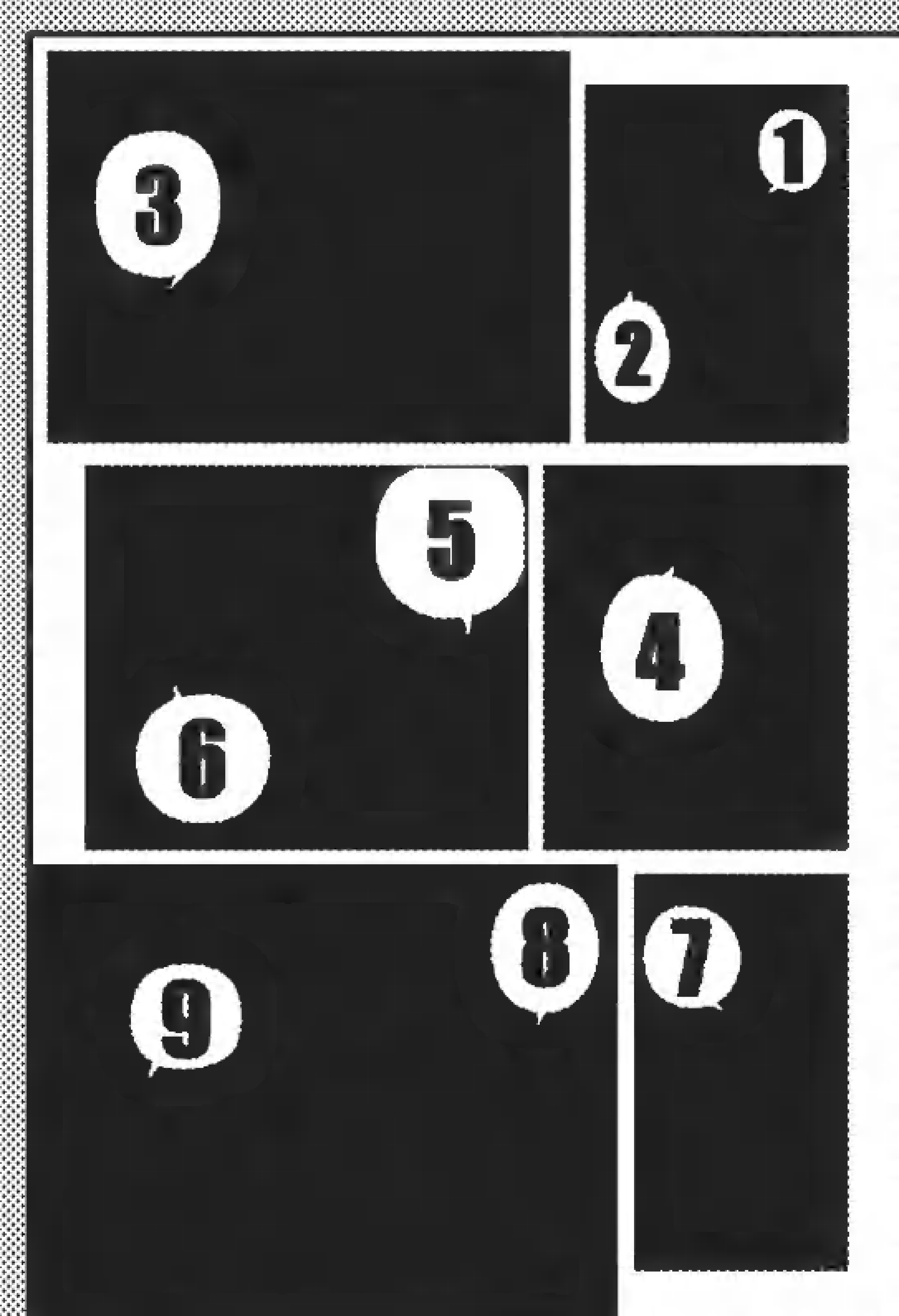
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READING DIRECTIONS

This book reads from ***right to left***, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!



The Last Goodbye

Alice has finally revealed her secret to Hanako: she is Victor Franks! Yet secrets that must be kept still abound, and family, status, and love bind Alice like thorns. Will she and Hanako ever be free? The beautiful and stirring finale of *Goodbye, My Rose Garden*!



TEEN

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